United Nations A/C.3/71/SR.3

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
11 October 2016

Original: English

# Third Committee

**Summary record of the 3rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia)

## Contents

Organization of work

Agenda item 26: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

16-17251 (E)

Please recycle

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Organization of work**

1. **The Chair**, reporting on her consultations with the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs as to whether the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea could provide an oral update at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, said that the provisions of Human Rights Council resolutions 29/18 and 32/34, read together, provided a sufficient basis for members of the commission of inquiry to provide such an update, notwithstanding the fact that the Human Rights Council had not extended the mandate of the commission of inquiry. She therefore intended to proceed on that basis.

2. **Mr. Said** (Eritrea) sought assurances that his delegation would have the opportunity to formulate another question to the Office of Legal Affairs in the event that no agreement was reached.

3. **The Chair** said that further consultations among the interested parties would be held.

**Agenda item 26: Social development** (*continued*) (A/71/188)

**(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*) (A/71/61-E/2016/7, A/71/214)

**(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas** (*continued*) (A/71/177)

4. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Report on the World Social Situation 2016 provided a reminder that while poverty had declined dramatically across the world, progress remained uneven and social and economic inequalities were increasing in many cases. Nowhere was that deterioration more apparent than in areas where protracted conflict had become a part of daily life; children and youth were being raised under the rules of war, rather than the rule of law. For the victims of conflict, there was no peace and security, no human rights and development — no one to turn to for help.

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development showed great promise in addressing the root causes of conflict and crises, making them less likely to happen in the future. If achieved with full respect for human life and dignity, the 2030 Agenda would eradicate extreme poverty, reverse rising inequality, stem environmental degradation and lay the foundation for peaceful and inclusive societies.

6. The needs of those forced to migrate must be addressed. Unable to secure a regular and orderly path, migrants risked their lives at the hands of traffickers. If they reached their intended destination, they were often met with hostility, fear, racism and xenophobia. The recently adopted New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants had set the stage for a series of commitments to face those challenges collectively, but political will, cooperation and solidarity would be required to translate that hope into reality.

7. At a time of major migratory movements, the question of identity was not a secondary issue. Both those who migrated and those who welcomed them were forced to change. The challenge was not to experience those changes as obstacles but as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth.

8. **Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan) said that the goal of social development had often been seen as economic growth, yet his Government saw the social and economic dimensions of development as indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Development could not be sustainable if it was not broad-based and inclusive. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development had first enunciated that linkage, while the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development placed the individual at the core of the development paradigm. Social development was a process that involved a fairer distribution of opportunity and resources to foster social justice by reducing inequality within and between States through promotion of inclusive societies.

9. The international community had just observed the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which complemented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There was a growing recognition that development could not be fully realized without the ability to participate in the development process. Pakistan attached great importance to the social uplift of its people by providing new and better opportunities for all in society. The Government had taken a number of nationwide initiatives to provide financial support,

education and technical training to the most vulnerable segments of the population to enable them to graduate from poverty and gain the technical skills needed to function as productive members of society. It had also designed strategies for women, youth and the disabled to partner in development and participate fully in society, in line with its commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. **Ms. Kay** (Singapore) said that General Assembly resolution 70/129, "Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond" recognized volunteerism as a powerful means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The number of youth volunteers in Singapore was increasing; the approach was based on integrating volunteerism into national strategies and creating an environment which empowered youth to take ownership of causes they felt passionately about, focusing on the areas of education, volunteer champions and digital platforms.

11. In the area of education, volunteer programmes were embedded into the national school curriculum through the Values in Action programme. To engage youth beyond their school years, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the National Youth Council had partnered with the Ministry of Education in the development of the Community and Youth Leadership School initiative. Efforts to support the creation of youth volunteer champions included the establishment of the Youth Corps Singapore to harness their potential through community service and leadership programmes. The National Youth Council also administered the National Youth Fund to promote ground-up projects. The Internet, social media and other digital platforms were key to reaching the young. An integrated online portal, Giving.sg, made volunteer opportunities accessible on a single website.

12. It was essential to continue to engage youth by providing them with a conducive environment, maximizing their opportunities and expanding their networks, as part of an overall effort to encourage volunteerism across all levels of society.

13. **Mr. Rosa** (Honduras), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Government of Honduras was actively working to promote inclusion of its youth in the country's development. It was providing scholarships and loans for education, as well as grants for young entrepreneurs through the "Banca Solidaria" programme. Graduates of technical schools and universities were encouraged to form new ventures as a way to create new opportunities and jobs for youth.

14. **Mr. Donado** (Honduras), speaking as a youth delegate, said that 60 per cent of the population of Honduras was under age 25. The Government, in addition to fighting corruption and crime as a means of rising out of under-development and poverty, was focusing on youth employment. A programme to create 450 jobs in public hospitals was aimed at creating secure jobs and futures for graduates, while improving services to patients of limited means. Another project had employed youth in bringing electricity to thousands of rural families without access to that basic public utility, improving their standard of living.

15. His travels throughout Honduras as a medical interpreter had convinced him that it was more important than ever to harness the passion of youth and to work in solidarity to achieve a better world.

16. **Ms. Al Amri** (Saudi Arabia) said that her Government had included the 2030 Agenda in all its social development plans. It had been among the first to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had taken a number of measures at the national level to ensure their full enjoyment of rights and participation in society. Resources had been allocated to encourage all levels of education, in order to provide graduates with skills to meet the needs of the job market and foster youth employment through national job creation measures. Efforts to improve the medical system had resulted in an increase in life expectancy. Her Government had also taken measures to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and participated in cultural and scientific exchanges. In its view, one of the main obstacles to social development was the need to promote and guarantee basic rights in the least developed countries.

17. **Ms. Dolidze** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth had a role to play in the journey towards sustainable development, as beneficiaries, partners and agents of positive change.

18. In Georgia, the biggest challenge in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals was ensuring that no one was left behind, given the fact that a significant portion of Georgian territory was under

Russian occupation. She described a young Georgian who, as a boy, had been kidnapped in South Ossetia, yet had survived and after his release had gone on to win a medal for his country at the 2016 Rio Olympics. The international community should foster the hopes rather than the fears of young people living in conflict-affected areas. In its implementation of the Goals, her country ensured that the 400,000 internally displaced persons in its territory also benefitted.

19. As a youth delegate, she had spearheaded a campaign to popularize vocational education, towards the implementation of Goals 1, 4 and 8. A flashmob raising awareness of pedestrian safety in crosswalks had also targeted Goals 3 and 11.

20. Among remaining challenges, employment was a major concern to Georgian youth. The majority of unemployed young people had completed higher education, indicating that the natural link from education to employment had been broken. Although more women than men had advanced degrees, women's unemployment rates were higher. Gender imbalances went beyond economic discrimination; harmful traditional practices and sexual violence were still common. Regrettably, discrimination against persons with disabilities was also still the norm among Georgian youth.

21. The youth of Georgia and the world must come together to combat the darkness of animosity and fear, social injustice, gender inequality and most importantly, ignorance and indifference.

22. **Mr. Eigeland** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the stage had been set for empowerment of young people, who were recognized as critical agents of change.

23. An overwhelming majority of the young people he had met in his capacity as a youth delegate had expressed confidence in the future, but that confidence had been tempered by fear of economic disruption and inequality. For many, inequality was driven by unemployment; in his own country the unemployment rate for youth was twice that of the general population.

24. In addition to raising the most pressing issues they faced, young people had also proposed solutions. In their view, the starting point for inclusive economic development must be inclusive, relevant and high-quality education. For example, information technology was being used effectively to provide affordable access to education in remote areas of Australia. The time had long since come for equal gender representation in industry, technology and government and for policy frameworks to encourage women to participate in society and men to share in the unpaid care work for their families.

25. His generation, which would reach its forties by 2030 and the conclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals, did not want to be forced to admit to the next generation that it had failed to build an inclusive economic agenda, and was prepared to meet that challenge.

26. **Mr. Wu** Haitao (China) said that hundreds of millions of people were living in extreme poverty, and developing countries faced significant social development challenges that were compounded by a sluggish global economy, regional territorial conflicts and the spreading threat of terrorism. As the first goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a core social development issue, the eradication of poverty should be prioritized by the international community. Countries needed to take effective action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, an important element of which was social development.

27. In developing awareness of a shared future for humanity and rectifying the emerging imbalance between North and South, developed countries should honour their Official Development Assistance commitments and help developing countries achieve social development, improve education levels and respond to public health challenges. Developing countries needed to strengthen South-South cooperation to achieve solidarity and self-reliance.

28. Social inclusiveness was a moral imperative and increased participation by vulnerable groups in education, health and employment was required to enhance sustainable development. The United Nations needed to play a greater role in helping developing countries in particular to achieve social development. The Commission for Social Development must fulfil its mandate from the Copenhagen Summit and strive for early achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as poverty eradication, education, health and employment.

29. China was the world's most populous developing country and the first to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Remarkable results in poverty reduction, health and education had been achieved in the past 15 years, with 400 million people lifted out of poverty and the potential elimination of poverty entirely by 2020. By the end of 2015, China had contributed 400 billion yuan to 166 countries and organizations, and had provided training to 12 million people in developing countries.

30. China had incorporated the 2030 Agenda targets into its national development plans, and believed it could reach the goals for poverty and hunger eradication, maternity and child health care, and housing ahead of schedule. Other priority targets for agriculture, health, education and economic growth could be attained on schedule by 2030.

31. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work remained important goals, while clear but unequal social progress was being achieved. Human-centred development with a focus on leaving no one behind must include the portion of the global population living in extreme poverty, over 10 per cent. Societies needed to combat poverty if they were to achieve sustainable development, which required the participation of all members of society in every country.

32. Achievement of the economic and environmental goals called for a truly inclusive society in which the necessary changes in approach to production, consumption and the environment could be adopted. Literacy was an essential tool in combatting poverty and social exclusion. In view of the literacy figures cited from the report by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), priority should be given to the education of women and girls. Strengthened efforts were needed to eliminate the vicious cycle of social exclusion.

33. Monaco praised the continued work of Mongolia on literacy and supported UNICEF in its travelling schools project to bring quality education to the children of nomadic herders in remote regions of that country. The partnership between UNESCO and Microsoft reinforced the innovative use of digital technology for local language literacy and distance learning.

34. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that it was crucial to examine the nexus of interrelated factors affecting social inclusion in view of the uneven results obtained globally, as development would only be sustainable if inclusive. Mongolia had recently adopted the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030 following the 2030 Agenda. Its social development objectives were to ensure gender equality, provide equal high-quality education to every citizen, build a national system for lifelong education, end all forms of poverty, and expand the middle-income segment of the population. The first phase was the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020, launched in August 2016. In urban areas, more schools and nurseries would be built, and students would continue to receive monthly stipends and free school bus and public transport services. School attendance by children of herders in rural areas would be supported, and their dormitory facilities would be significantly enhanced.

35. In the field of health care, methods of medical diagnosis would be advanced, public health education improved, and a national disease prevention programme implemented, along with capacity-building activities for medical professionals. Health sector funding would gradually be doubled, and a special fund established to support the health sector.

36. The Government of Mongolia was addressing the financing of the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development with measures including educational subsidies and loans, and a planned increase in results-based public funding for academic research and innovation. Literacy was a means of individual empowerment and the realization of a more inclusive, just and sustainable society.

37. **Mr. Khoshroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that greater health, wealth and education had not necessarily resulted in more equal societies worldwide. Structural shifts were required to overcome the economic, social and political barriers that often excluded certain demographic groups, or indeed countries, from prosperity.

38. Nine of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were closely associated with social development. Their implementation should focus particularly on the elderly, youth, persons with disabilities and the family to improve the inclusion of those groups and reap the greatest societal benefits.

39. Iran prioritized youth empowerment in the social, economic and political arenas. Extensive investment in education and health care had already been paid off despite challenges including an imposed war and unfair sanctions. The rights and privileges of senior citizens remain safeguarded. The Government had provided education and training for persons with disabilities and hiring incentives for prospective employers.

40. The country's continual improvement in the Human Development Index confirmed the success of the measures to date, although more work was needed, particularly on employment.

41. **Mr. Lambertini** (Italy) said the 2030 Agenda would empower the largest generation of young people in history to shape the future. For 15 years, the National Civilian Service had been allowing young people aged 18 to 28 to experience active citizenship for one year in projects focusing on solidarity, cooperation and assistance. The Italian Government had made the European Voluntary Service one of its objectives as a result, and had initiated a pilot project with France for 100 Italian and French youths who would undertake their voluntary service in both countries.

42. Italy strongly welcomed Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) officially recognizing the positive, powerful role of young people in building, maintaining and promoting international peace and security, preventing and combatting violent extremism, and sustaining democratic and inclusive governance.

43. The Italian Parliament had recently adopted a law recognizing specific protections for persons with severe disabilities upon the passing of their caregiving parents, aimed at ensuring maximum autonomy and independence of disabled persons in such circumstances. at the fifth National Conference on Disabilities held in September 2016 the Plan of Action for 2018 was discussed with the participation of the Prime Minister and over 1,000 representatives of national institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and persons with disabilities.

44. **Ms. Berrouba** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that education was a human right, a cornerstone of critical thinking and self-realization, and a catalyst for gender equality, health, peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. Every society should prioritize education by ensuring that every child and young person went to school, and also by dedicating special methods and resources to reaching young people whose access to education had previously been limited, such as those in extreme poverty and young migrants and refugees. Gender-based differences in access to education must be eliminated. Everyone must have access to all levels of education and lifelong learning.

45. Children and youth comprised half of the current refugee population, making the refugee crisis a generational one. The conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan and climate change were displacing large numbers of people and creating new migration patterns. With living as a refugee becoming increasingly common, legal routes for refugees, as well as their human rights, security, health, and opportunities for self-fulfilment and self-reliance were of growing importance. The right to asylum must be unanimously upheld. Human rights were inalienable; urgent action was needed to ensure refugees' rights to shelter, employment, education and safe passage. If young refugees did not have access to education, there was a risk that an entire generation would be lost.

46. Inclusive social, political and economic platforms were needed to address those challenges, and young people must be allowed to have the necessary information to take part. Education would make that awareness possible. Partnerships for change both between and within countries, and specifically intergenerational dialogue, were needed for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

47. **Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his Government attached great importance to social development, particularly poverty eradication, education, health and employment. National social development programmes and projects had resulted in a reduction in poverty and improved household welfare. Sustained economic growth had enabled his country to go from being a low-income country to a lower middle-income country according to the World Bank. However, its growth was overly reliant on the extractive sector; diversification was needed for increased resilience and growth that was sustainable.

48. His Government's prioritization of education had led to a considerable increase in the percentage of

children enrolled in primary education in the period from 2005 to 2015. It was also strengthening technical and vocational training to enable the country's workforce to meet labour market demands. Nevertheless, challenges remained: the school dropout rate was still high, particularly in remote areas, and the quality of education required improvement.

49. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had measures in place to eliminate social discrimination against persons with disabilities, support their social integration and ensure that no one was left behind. The Government was committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as its social and economic development plan demonstrated.

50. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that his Government was implementing the 2030 Agenda in coordination with relevant national and regional plans. It was in the process of drafting a new, inclusive national development plan, which would address the needs of communities across the country. The Government had also launched a five-year prosperity plan to accelerate development and ensure that no one was left behind. In the first year of implementation some targets, such as the launch of urban food banks, had already been met. The plan would lead to, inter alia, greater transparency at the national level, a reduction in poverty, the establishment of a competitive vocational training system and measures to support youth entrepreneurship.

51. Since universal access to education was key to the success of those plans, the Government had made its free primary education policy also applicable to secondary education, resulting in higher levels of enrolment and more university students obtaining teaching degrees in order to teach in rural areas. Technical and vocational institutions were being revitalized. The Government was also allocating greater financial resources to the provision of social safety nets for the elderly, orphans and people living with disabilities.

52. El Niño had left much of Namibia drought-stricken, causing record numbers of livestock deaths and low crop yields. The effects of the drought on rural populations, coupled with falling commodity prices, which increased the cost of essential items, were devastating. His Government therefore called for continued assistance from bilateral and development partners.

53. **Ms. O'Reilly** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young Irish people felt marginalized and discriminated against. The solution was education and integration. Social, political and civic education should be made compulsory, and education should not be segregated on any grounds, including religion or gender. Humanity must focus on that which united it, not that which divided it. Young women should not have to anticipate futures in which they were likely to be paid less than their male colleagues, and more likely to experience sexual assault than men. A just and sustainable future world could not be achieved by excluding sectors of society. A future that left no one behind should be built not just for everyone, but by everyone.

54. **Mr. O'Rourke** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he had consulted young people across Ireland concerning what those in power should prioritize, and youth participation had emerged as a common theme. Young Irish people had also expressed fears about what the future would hold for them as Europeans and about political extremism fracturing the bonds that united society. Youth participation, through such initiatives as the 2030 Agenda and Global Citizenship Education, could help to counter extremism. Young people could provide the fresh perspectives needed to solve age-old problems; therefore they should be supported to become agents for change: educational institutions should have student councils and should award academic credit for civic engagement, youth organizations should be run by young people, and regional youth councils should be established and strengthened. Young people trusted in society, but society needed to place more trust in them.

55. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino), highlighting the connection between human rights and global challenges related to poverty, climate change, inequality, terrorism, conflict, violent extremism and the refugee crisis, said that promotion and protection of human rights should underpin efforts by the United Nations to achieve peace, security and sustainable development. His Government hoped, through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to eradicate poverty, increase employment and decent work, and

foster social integration to build a stable, safe and just society.

56. His Government focused on the needs of the most vulnerable, such as children, disabled people, the elderly and women. The advancement of women's rights must be a top priority for the United Nations. Recalling the clear relationship between disability, poverty and social exclusion, he pointed out that San Marino had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It recognized the importance of older persons in its charter on the rights of the elderly, adopted in 2008, and encouraged them to play an active part in society. His country called for the universal ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. San Marino would unfailingly support the United Nations in its essential role in promoting social development.

57. **Ms. Bratu** and **Mr. Uifalean** (Romania), speaking as youth delegates, said that the world was globalized, digitized, unequal and violent, and the greater good for the majority could be accomplished only through teamwork. Since civic engagement was vital in developing the societies people wanted, and also in fostering the vital attributes of critical thinking, creativity and openness, national legislation should make it a mandatory exercise for every young person. There should be national mentoring programmes for vulnerable young people, such as orphans and those living in poverty.

58. Regardless of background, young people must be given tools to enable them to fulfil their role as co-creators of society. The existing educational system offered only some of what was needed to navigate professional and private life. Unfortunately, pressure to perform academically dominated young people's formative experience. Education should foster curiosity and inspire commitment to lifelong learning and self-improvement. Young people needed fulfilling professional lives to be able to actively support society. Various entities in Romania were supporting young people to find work through practical vocational programmes and volunteering opportunities. It was possible to be guided by the Sustainable Development Goals in one's academic, professional and personal life, but in order for that to happen the 2030 Agenda must be brought to the attention of young people, who had the energy to push it forward.

59. **Mr. Musama** (Zambia) said that Zambia was focused on inclusive, people-centred growth and had made the reduction of inequalities a priority in the National Performance Framework that guided the country's Seventh National Development Plan. The Government remained committed to the goals set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and had put in place policies aimed at creating jobs and reducing poverty by facilitating investments in select sectors and rural development.

60. As in other countries, persons with disabilities in Zambia still faced barriers to social inclusion due to inadequate access to services, facilities and opportunities. Significant progress had been made in implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, however, with the enactment of legislation to mainstream disability issues and the implementation of a comprehensive national policy on disability. A national survey on disabilities had been conducted, with cooperation partners, in 2015, and an information management system for disability statistics was under development. A national policy on ageing, addressing the full range of interrelated issues of old age and poverty, had been introduced that same year. In recognition of the role of the family in social integration, the Government had also introduced a cash transfer programme to protect the poorest families and reduce both extreme poverty and the inter-generational transfer of poverty. Over 240,000 households currently benefited under the scheme.

61. **Ms. Swaelens** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth participation in decision-making had evolved from the mere consultation of young people to a benchmark for real participative policymaking. Youth had been extensively involved in designing the 2030 agenda. For the sustainable development goals to become a success, however, it would be of paramount importance to keep youth on board. She therefore called on Governments, the United Nations and civil society to unleash the potential of youth and give more attention to youth participation, especially at the local, community level,

where it represented development not only of young people but of society in general.

62. **Ms. N'sa** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, in many countries, including hers, the quality of education that young people could obtain still depended on their social background, while in conflict zones, young people had no access to any education, in clear violation of their human rights. For youth to participate effectively in society as a force for peace and development, as described in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), they must be equipped with quality education based on knowledge, professional training and personal development and the principles of solidarity and peaceful coexistence. She urged Member States to invest in that quality education and in equal access to it, so that, together with effective youth participation, by 2030 they might cease to be goals on the development agenda and become realities instead and young people might have a stronger, safer and more egalitarian society in which to play their part.

63. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had set forth ambitious and promising goals and would spur the international community to continue striving to achieve inclusive sustainable development. Her country believed that, in the light of the persistent global disparities in terms of human development, it was crucial to promote social integration, which could help promote equitable development in both advanced and developing countries. On that basis, Qatar had adopted a people-centred approach in its national development plans in order to promote social development for all segments of society, eliminate poverty, ensure that everyone enjoyed access to high-quality education and create employment opportunities for all, including youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities.

64. By mainstreaming disability in the 2030 Agenda, the international community had underscored its commitment to ensuring that nobody was left behind. In that regard, Qatar had ensured that disability issues were addressed in its national development plans and was striving to empower persons with disabilities so that they could reap the benefits of development and enjoy access to all the services provided by the Government. Qatar also accorded particular attention to the situation of older persons and had formulated policies and programmes to ensure that they remained fully integrated members of their families and society and enjoyed access to social security programmes and healthcare services.

65. The statistics contained in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas" were worrying. At the same time there was cause for optimism and Qatar was convinced that the international community's ongoing efforts to eliminate illiteracy would eventually prove successful. Qatar believed that education was the key to development and was developing and supporting innovative educational programmes and initiatives both within the country and abroad, including the Education Above All initiative, which aimed to uphold children's right to education in crisis- and conflict-stricken regions, and the Educate a Child initiative, which aimed to provide high-quality primary education to more than 10 million children worldwide by the end of 2016.

66. Qatar had adopted laws and policies to strengthen the family, which was the fundamental unit of society, while the Qatar National Vision 2030 set forth measures to enhance the social safety net for families, particularly those in difficult circumstances, combat family violence and provide marital and family counselling. Qatar also sought raise awareness of the importance of intergenerational family relationships and, for over 12 years, had facilitated, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Committee's negotiations concerning resolutions on the International Year of the Family.

67. Qatar was encouraging innovation and creativity among young people, who could play a key role in fostering development, supported civil society organizations advocating on behalf of young people, and was making every effort to combat violent extremism and its impact on young people and children in Qatar, the region and beyond. Qatar also underscored the importance of addressing the needs of the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society, and expanding the scope of initiatives and partnerships to address their needs, particularly in least developed countries.

68. **Mr. Syed** (Canada), speaking as a youth delegate, said it was important to recognize that the imagination,

energy and ideals of young people were vital for the continued development of society. In Canada, the Prime Minister had mandated a national focus on youth development, and a youth council had been established to advise on a range of national issues. He encouraged other countries to engage in such consultations and to engage youth at all levels. It was also important to foster an environment of equal opportunity for all youth in which there was zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind.

69. **Ms. Tejeda-Alix** (Canada), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the prosperity of a nation depended on the productivity and innovation of its workforce and, in turn, on the training of its youth. Partnerships between industry, government and the education sector must be forged to promote quality education, prepare young people for the workplace and support their entrepreneurial initiatives. Young people in Canada were fortunate to live in a society where rights were respected and the rule of law and the accommodation of differences prevailed. Canadian youth were motivated to work with their counterparts around the globe to ensure youth everywhere could thrive. They called on all youth to challenge their leaders, friends, colleagues and professors, as well as themselves.

70. **Mr. Al-Hussaini** (Iraq) said that his country had been one of the first to accede to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Iraqi Constitution enshrined the rights of all sectors of society, including families, young people, mothers, children, older persons, the sick and persons with disabilities. The Constitution also guaranteed the provision of assistance to older persons to promote their full integration into society and to young people so that they could develop the skills they needed to realize their full potential, and prohibited all forms of child exploitation. Furthermore, Iraq provided loans and grants for the establishment of small business enterprises, particularly to young people, sought to provide vocational training to boost employment, and had increased the social assistance provided by the State to those most in need.

71. Iraq's 2014-2018 development plan sought to enhance the healthcare services and social support provided to vulnerable sectors of society. Iraq was also seeking to combat corruption. The Government was, moreover, sponsoring research into the provision of assistance with a view to enhancing efficiency and ensuring that support reached those who needed it most.

72. Although Iraq was making every effort to promote development, it faced a multitude of challenges. Those included major security and economic challenges resulting from the actions of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) criminal gangs, including their occupation of certain parts of the country, their destruction of the country's infrastructure and restrictions they had placed on economic activity. That had exacerbated poverty in the areas they occupied, worsened unemployment, severely curtailed children's education, undermined the provision of healthcare services and undermined the country's social and cultural values. Furthermore, the internal displacement of Iraqis had severely undermined their social and economic wellbeing. The Iraqi Government was, nonetheless, steadfast in its determination to do everything possible to improve the social situation of the Iraqi people by promoting development and social cohesion. To that end, the Government of Iraq was, inter alia, collaborating with the World Bank to design and launch a fund that would provide financial assistance to the poorest sectors of society. Iraq was evaluating the preparedness of social support mechanisms and civil society organizations in the country's governorates to oversee and ensure the successful implementation of that fund, and expected to conclude that evaluation by the end of 2016. Iraq looked forward to continuing its collaboration with international organizations, particularly the United Nations, with a view to supporting the country's social development.

73. **Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan) said that in the current context, macroeconomic and social stabilization strategies were needed to achieve social wellbeing. The 2030 Agenda represented a paradigm shift that would require enormous resources: the President of Kazakhstan had proposed, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, that States should allocate 1 per cent of their annual defence budgets to a special United Nations fund for sustainable development. At the same time, supportive, transparent and accountable public institutions were needed to combat discrimination and social exclusion and ensure rigorous monitoring and assessment of sectors at risk. Policymaking should be democratic and

participatory and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. In that regard, despite the global economic situation, Kazakhstan had increased annually its funding of programmes for children, youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The national Kazakhstan 2050 strategy and the associated economic policy would guarantee improvements in education, healthcare, social housing and social security and seek to modernize and develop the labour market and the information and technology sectors.

74. In its social programmes, the Government promoted the concept of active ageing to ensure that the elderly, who accounted for 10 per cent of the population, enjoyed their rights. Youth participation in national policy and decision-making was ensured through various mechanisms, including a youth congress and a council on youth policy. Kazakh youth had access to free formal education at all levels, as well as vocational training and microloans, and 10,000 Kazakh students had graduated from top-ranking universities abroad thanks to a presidential scholarship programme. Meanwhile a national action plan for 2012-2018 was opening up new horizons for persons with disabilities. In the labour market, jobs for persons with disabilities would be subsidized and a mandated quota system would be introduced.

75. Kazakhstan remained committed to working for food, energy, water and nuclear security, which constituted the four pillars of its successful bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2017-2018. It had offered to host a regional hub of the United Nations in Almaty to promote sustainable development, facilitate humanitarian assistance and build resilience nationally and regionally in Central Asia.

76. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that the world was facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, with the mass influx of displaced populations adding to the social development challenges of the affected countries. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda required a policy framework based on an inclusive, rights-based approach that ensured persons with or without disabilities and of all ages were integrated into development efforts, especially in light of the ageing of the population. The empowerment of women and gender equality, as well as the provision of decent education and employment opportunities to youth, were also of paramount importance, and his country would continue to prioritize those issues.

77. The multidimensional approach adopted in Turkey's national development plan had yielded many positive results. Vulnerable groups now had better access to basic health and education, and the coverage of social services had expanded. Unprecedented flows of migrants and refugees were, however, having a direct impact on Turkey's social development agenda. The country was hosting the largest refugee population in the world: over 3 million people. The Government's non-discriminatory "open door" policy continued. All Syrian refugees received protection and free medical services; those living in temporary protection centres were also provided with food and other essentials, as well as health, education, psychological and other support services. Legislation had been enacted to grant Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey access to the Turkish labour market. Greater international cooperation, burden- and responsibility-sharing was needed to assist the displaced, as well as the host countries and communities. Hardship and conflict increased both social and economic vulnerability. It was essential to extend support to countries prone to, and emerging from, conflict and to strengthen the nexus between development and humanitarian activities.

78. **Mr. Djani** (Indonesia) said that, in order to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and increase social mobility, the Committee should focus on reducing inequality and ensuring equal access to employment opportunities, as well as linking social development to disaster risk reduction in order to build societal resilience and social unity.

79. The Indonesian Government had instituted a number of social development programmes to enhance the capacities, income, resilience and welfare of families, which remained the basic social structure and were essential to achieving sustainable development. Indonesia's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women was also reflected in a number of national development strategies, including a national action plan on human rights with policies, inter alia, to combat violence and discrimination against women.

80. With regard to youth, the Government was striving to improve the capacities of youth groups and was encouraging young people not to delay marriage. In addition, educational programmes and coaching for youth groups were being organized through a rural development programme. The Government was also promoting new ways to create youth employment, while expanding and strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises.

81. Furthermore, due to the demographic significance of the elderly in Indonesia, the rights and empowerment of older persons were promoted through the Government's national strategy for the elderly and its constituent programmes.

82. With regard to persons with disabilities, the Government had incorporated disability into its policy frameworks and human rights mechanisms, while the national action plan on human rights emphasized the development of an inclusive environment, increased advocacy and improved facilities, infrastructure, public services, education and socialization.

83. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian Government prioritized the empowerment of people in poverty eradication, social integration, full employment and decent work in its policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. In 2015, the Government had launched an ambitious social protection programme aimed at reducing poverty and creating employment opportunities for people living in poverty. Provision had been made in the national budget for a social development fund aimed at recruiting 500,000 teachers to improve the quality of education in public schools, provide nutritious daily meals for primary school students and improve learning outcomes.

84. As part of efforts to establish inclusive global youth development strategies, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development should serve as the platform for mainstreaming youth issues into the 2030 Agenda. At the national level, Nigeria had launched a national youth development plan to create a platform for the participation of young people in socioeconomic development. In association with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Government had been providing young people in Nigeria with appropriate vocational training, as well as helping them to acquire new skills. Such social inclusion programmes would lead to social change throughout Nigeria.

85. To incorporate the economic empowerment, full participation and interests of persons with disabilities into all national development programmes and strategies, the Government had appointed a special adviser to the President on persons with disabilities. Furthermore, overarching legislation to ensure full societal integration and create a national commission for persons with disabilities had been approved by the Nigerian House of Representatives.

86. In order to improve the care and well-being of older persons, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing would be used to develop a policy for the elderly while a draft national policy on ageing was undergoing the required legislative processes. Upon completion, those initiatives would help to alleviate poverty, improve living standards and ensure the protection of older persons.

87. Family values remained indispensable to Nigeria's overall political, cultural and socioeconomic development. In addition, Nigeria had integrated human rights into its social development programmes by pursuing effective humanitarian policies. For instance, the Government paid particular attention to the welfare of over two million internally displaced persons from north-eastern Nigeria who were being sheltered in camps nationwide by meeting their immediate humanitarian needs, reducing their vulnerability and increasing their resilience by providing vocational training and skills acquisition programmes.

88. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that his Government continued to prioritize the empowerment of its people in its development plan, which included poverty eradication, education, skills development, the elimination of discrimination and extremism, inclusion, participation and the creation of employment.

89. In recent years, Bangladesh had sustained a growth rate in its gross domestic product of over 6 per cent, which had played an important role in eradicating poverty and had been accompanied by an increase in life expectancy and a lower fertility rate, despite the country's high population density. The percentage of the population living below the poverty line had also decreased, while progress had been made in increasing

equitable access to education. The proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation was higher than in other south Asian countries.

90. Despite resource constraints, as well as social, economic and environmental challenges, substantial progress had been made with regard to persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on guaranteeing the right to education of children with disabilities.

91. International cooperation remained crucial, as well as the need to focus on a strengthened, coherent and integrated development approach, including the fulfilment of international commitments on official development assistance and the timely implementation of all commitments under the global partnership for development. It was also important to ensure the effective enforcement of labour laws relating to migrant workers, regarding, inter alia, their remuneration, working conditions, health, work safety and freedom of association. Lastly, the role of the Commission of Social Development should be strengthened as a potential platform for following up the social dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

92. **Mr. Solik** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth participation in global affairs required the creation of a platform for young people to voice their concerns, the inclusion of those concerns in public policies, the implementation of adequate legislation on the elimination of age-based discrimination and the digitization of learning environments, and the establishment of a transparent and cooperative approach to youth affairs in international organizations. Youth was a valuable asset and youth empowerment should be viewed as a platform for equitable treatment and mutual understanding in order to enhance intergenerational relations.

93. **Mr. Skręta** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, as growing up required courage, creativity and the willingness to question accepted practices, young people had the idealism and passion to generate new ideas and should be included whenever change was necessary. The United Nations needed to continue to move forward and deserved to benefit from taking the views of young people into consideration.

94. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that, in recent years, Ukraine had managed to improve maternal health, almost halve child mortality, reduce the incidence rates of HIV/AIDS and make progress in combating tuberculosis. However, social development was a serious challenge for the Ukrainian Government due to the Russian Federation's occupation of Crimea and continuing aggression in the Donbas region, as a result of which thousands of people had been killed or wounded. Critical and civilian infrastructure had been ruined, leaving millions of Ukrainian citizens without a place to live. There were also approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine, one of the highest figures worldwide.

95. Nonetheless, the Government had established a new Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons and had introduced a comprehensive mechanism to secure social needs and provide access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Despite financial difficulties, funds had been allocated from national and local budgets to provide financial support to internally displaced persons. Together with local and international NGOs, as well as other partners, Ukraine was working to foster integration of the internally displaced persons, particularly children who had lost their families in the aggression, and provide them with housing, jobs and other forms of support.

96. Ending the military aggression, establishing peace and restoring the full sovereignty of Ukraine over the Donbas region and Crimea were extremely important in returning normalcy to the lives of millions of people in Ukraine, as well as recovering the economic and social infrastructure in the affected regions.

97. Despite ongoing challenges, Ukraine was working at the national level to fulfil its commitments with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the Goals related to promoting gender equality, combatting corruption, and ensuring a healthy environment and a sustainable energy supply. Furthermore, in recent years, Ukraine had implemented a number of reforms in line with the democratic development path chosen by the Ukrainian people, while the Government was striving to improve social standards. Ukraine planned to implement new programmes and projects to promote microeconomic

stability, an environmental balance and social development.

98. **Mr. Beskoravayny** (Ukraine), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, due to the unprecedented interconnectedness of all nations, individual States could not be indifferent to the problems of others. Speaking from his personal experience, the outcome of peaceful student protests in Ukraine had shown the impact that youth could have on society.

99. While global issues such as youth unemployment, gender equality and discrimination were important in Ukraine, safety concerns had changed the priorities of young Ukrainians, particularly those living in the occupied territories. Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) was particularly important in that regard as it recognized that, without protecting the lives and dignity of young people and engaging them on issues of peace and security, it was impossible to build lasting peace.

100. In summer 2016, youth delegates had organized a volunteer project which provided them with an opportunity to communicate with over 1200 young people from across Ukraine, including the occupied territories. Ukraine's diversity, multiculturalism and multilingualism benefitted both the country and its citizens.

101. Lastly, the international community must continue to protect and support young people, as well as increasing the representation of young people in decision-making at all levels in order to secure peace, and prevent and resolve conflicts.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*